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Eradication of poverty and other development issues**Human resources development****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

Human resources development lies at the core of economic and social development and environmental protection. It is therefore a vital component for achieving sustainable development and for measuring progress towards that end. The present report addresses the role and importance of human resources development in the implementation and achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including the sustainable development goals.

The present report was prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 68/228. It discusses the integration of human resources development strategies into the implementation of the 2030 agenda and new avenues for advancing the objectives of human resources development in the setting of that agenda, and suggests recommendations for further developing and implementing human resources development policies in the new agenda.

Particular attention is paid to the interlinkages between human resources development and several sustainable development goals, including healthy lives and well-being, education and learning, and growth, employment and work. The report emphasizes the role of human resources development in national sustainable development strategies. It also underscores the need for broad and integrated human resources development approaches that are sensitive to specific needs of vulnerable populations and integrated into strategic areas, including population, health, nutrition, education and training, science and technology and employment.

* A/70/150.



I. Introduction

1. Human resources development has been defined as the empowerment of people by enabling them with the capacities and abilities to improve the quality of their lives and that of their families, communities and societies. Over the years, human resources development has evolved from focusing on the individual to improving institutional capacity at the local, national, regional and international levels through socioeconomic and development policies and strategies. Human resources development is, therefore, the facilitation of the development of human capacities to achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable development while enhancing the well-being of individuals. It encompasses human capacity development through formal and informal education, training and lifelong learning, utilizing all available technologies and other resources.

2. The adoption by the General Assembly in September 2015 of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development will mark a transformation in the global development paradigm. The agenda's overriding objectives are to eradicate poverty and complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals, while making a transition to and advancing sustainable development. The agenda will bring together poverty eradication and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — into a unified and universal development framework. The agenda is for all countries, leaving no one behind.

3. The Millennium Development Goals provided a compelling framework to address the needs of the world's poorest people. There have been many success related to human resources development achieved through the Millennium Development Goals, including the reduction in abject poverty and improvements to human health globally. However, those goals have not encompassed all of the issues necessary, in terms of human resources development, to help countries progress towards a more broad-based, integrated and sustainable development. The transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals will require a clear vision of their implications and preparedness at all levels and among all partners for their implementation, and for expanding opportunities for all people, particularly the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

4. The international community faces a different set of development challenges at the outset of the 2030 agenda compared to the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000. The new agenda will be implemented in the context of the growing interdependence of countries and the interconnectedness of global development issues. Globalization and interdependence have opened up opportunities for development, yet the benefits have not been equally distributed, as many people have been excluded from their positive effects. In addition, the world has faced serious food, energy, financial, economic, health and environmental challenges across countries in the past decade, amplifying global systemic risks. Taken together, those challenges have had far-reaching consequences for human resources development in equipping countries to prevent and overcome challenges and pursue progress towards a sustainable path of development.

5. Human resource development has a core role in achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development at all levels. The present report provides an overview of the main characteristics of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and its interrelationship with human resources development. The next section addresses the integration of human resources development into the implementation of the new

agenda. The third section focuses on the new avenues for advancing the objectives of human resources development in the setting of the 2030 agenda. The report concludes with recommendations.

II. Implications of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development for human resources development

6. The broadening of the development agenda to include the proposed 17 sustainable development goals is a significant transformation in global development policy. Actions to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development are interdependent and require integrated policy responses that maximize opportunities for synergy and for balancing trade-offs. That is different from the Millennium Development Goals, for which actors generally pursued individual goals independently of one another.

7. The demand for policy integration will grow significantly with the transition to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Integration is at the core of sustainable development and the proposed sustainable development goals. The economic, social and environmental dimensions will need to be effectively integrated during policy formulation and in implementation. Policy integration will need to be carried out within and across sectors and supported by policy coordination and coherence among national, regional and global development efforts.

8. The new approach to global development will have implications for human resources development, requiring human resources development strategies to be redesigned to support policy integration. Given that the primary focus on the implementation of the agenda will be at the national level, a reorientation of skills will be required in many countries. The regional and global levels of implementation will also require institutional adjustments in integrated approaches to human resources development, particularly in support of the efforts of national governments.

A. Human resource development and the sustainable development goals

9. With the adoption of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, Member States will embark on a new global development paradigm that recognizes eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions. It prioritizes the eradication of extreme poverty as the greatest global challenge, and identifies that as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Investing in people in human resources development is placed at the centre of the new transformative and universal agenda. The interconnected nature of all sustainable development goals contained in the agenda means that all goals are relevant as core human resources development issues in the new global setting. However, in the era starting with the adoption of the agenda, four goals will be of particular relevance to human resources development: healthy lives and well-being; education and learning; growth, employment and work; and the impact of climate change. Those goals will be pursued within a broader global setting that will include challenges related to the inequality between and within nations, growing demographic changes, increased public demand for greater participation in shaping policy and the increased need for the application of science, technology, and innovation for human resources development. The ensuing paragraphs summarize each area.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

10. Health is an essential aspect of human resources development; humans can only be productive participants in the economy if they are fit and healthy. It is therefore essential to ensure that every person has access to affordable and accessible health-care services, and to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, beginning in early childhood. Interventions in early childhood development that provide basic health care, adequate nutrition and a stimulating, nurturing and caring environment will help enable children to progress in primary school, continue through secondary school and engage in productive employment.

11. Many developing countries have emerging yet fragile health systems. They need significant support and strengthening for their health-care systems to effectively deliver equitable and reliable services. Every person should have access to quality health care, and several countries have attempted to provide and finance universal health coverage. Some have done so through public health services targeted directly at persons living in poverty.

12. Universal public health and education policies can be designed and implemented without sacrificing quality for the sake of greater coverage. Many communities experiencing poverty do not have alternatives to a public system, whereas wealthier groups are able to pay for private services. Such dynamics entrench inequalities, reduce social integration and undermine sustainable human development. When financial resources are adequately provided, publicly provided services need not be inferior to private services.

13. Water is essential to human survival and to sustainable development, and therefore it is essential to human resources development. In the new agenda, positive health outcomes will be highly dependent upon investments in water and sanitation. Such investments will need to ensure achievements in universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and improved water quality and reduction in pollution, as laid out in goal 6. Expanding water and sanitation services will provide high returns on investment and will generate substantial economic gains for all.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

14. Education, skills and vocational training, together with lifelong learning, form the basis for human resources development. The successful introduction of changes needed to achieve sustainable development can be facilitated through the recognition of the importance of education in sustainable development, preparing the learner with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to understand, respond to and prosper in the face of the economic, social and environmental challenges of today's world.

15. It has long been agreed that governments should strive to ensure that all girls and boys have access to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education, as well as access to affordable and quality technical and vocational training. During the past 15 years, the number of children attending primary school worldwide has increased to approximately 90 per cent. However, large geographic and gender disparities persist, and in nearly half of 162 countries with comparable data, girls do not have an equal chance of completing primary education (see A/69/62, para. 172).

16. Gains in secondary education have not been as rapid as those at the primary level. Access to secondary education remains a challenge for girls in many regions, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. The disproportionate exclusion of girls from education is not only greater at the secondary level than at the primary level, but also increases from the lower to upper secondary levels.

17. Education and training are core factors in determining the chance of a successful transition into work. In addition, internships and volunteering experiences can offer youth opportunities to develop life skills as well as help increase their chances of finding a job. While the expansion of general education observed in many countries in recent years has resulted in substantial increases in overall levels of educational attainment, the integration of youth into the labour market is still a major hurdle in many countries, highlighting the importance of the quality of the education system and its linkage to the labour market. For instance, in some countries with a high proportion of university graduates, unemployment or underemployment can be a consequence of educational mismatch, as high formal qualifications cannot be translated into matching jobs.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

18. Ultimately, each country's prosperity will depend to a large extent upon how many of its people are employed and how productive they are. That in turn rests on the skills they have acquired and how effectively those skills are used. Skills are a foundation of productive work. Equipping the workforce with the skills required for current and future employment is a strategic concern in the national growth and development outlooks of all countries.

19. Effective skills-development systems, which connect education to labour market entry and workplace and lifelong learning, can help countries sustain productivity growth and translate that growth into more and better jobs. Skills-development policies would need to build up capabilities and knowledge systems within the economy and society, which would in turn support sustainable development.

20. Training and skills development are understood in broad terms to cover the full sequence of life stages and human resources development. Basic education gives individuals a basis for the development of their potential, laying the foundation for employability. Initial training provides the core work skills, general knowledge and industry-based and professional competencies that facilitate the transition from education into the world of work. Lifelong learning maintains the skills and competencies of individuals at work and builds awareness of changes in technology and skill requirements. Different countries focus on different elements pertaining to relative strengths and weaknesses in their respective skills-development systems and as they learn more about innovations and experiences in other countries.

21. Youth, in particular, often experience difficulties entering the work force or accessing job opportunities, invariably because they have less experience and fewer skills than adults. Upon finding work, many youth still confront job insecurity, often owing to the lack of opportunities to develop skills, which can lead to joblessness. To

illustrate, in 2011, young people accounted for 23.5 per cent of the total working poor, compared with 18.6 per cent of non-poor workers.¹

22. Due to a growing youth population, many developing countries are unable to absorb young people into the labour market, leading to a disproportionate number affected by unemployment and underemployment. In 2010, for example, the global youth unemployment rate remained at 12.6 per cent, as compared to the global adult unemployment rate of 4.8 per cent.¹

23. There is also considerable evidence to show that integrating women into the workforce leads to increased growth and economic performance. Human resources development policies that promote equal opportunities for women and men to access relevant and quality education, vocational training and workplace learning will be necessary to ensure that all members of society, men and women, have the opportunity to enter the workforce and engage in productive and decent work. In particular, efforts should be made to target disadvantaged population groups with training and employment services for both women and men to help them realize their potential for productive work and help them contribute to economic and social development.

24. To address those challenges, many countries would need to implement integrated human resources development policies, strengthen the vocational part of their educational or schooling systems and bring existing vocational education and training systems closer to the current needs of the labour market to create a smoother transition in order for youth to access jobs. Employers should also be consulted regarding the design of vocational schooling curricula. That requires a systematic coordination with networks or associations of employers.

Goal 13. Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

25. Climate change is a significant human development challenge. Improving educational and institutional capacities to tackle climate change falls under human resources development efforts to ensure that populations can live healthy and prosperous lives. Development involves the expansion of human potential, empowering people to make choices that allow them to lead lives that they value. Climate change threatens to erode development gains and limit individual choice.

26. Global risks connected to the environment and climate change appear to be intensifying. Climate change is producing more droughts in arid regions and more frequent and intense weather events. It also leads to rising sea levels, flooding, water scarcity in key regions, the migration or extinction of plant and animal species and the acidification of oceans. Other environmental threats arise from extensive industrialization and rapid urbanization in some countries. In addition, in many countries there are growing problems of poor sanitation, degraded land, eroded soil, polluted air and threats to biodiversity. Climate change is adding to the variability in farm incomes and insecurity in livelihoods that depend upon ecosystems.

27. Climate change can be mitigated if citizens and States everywhere recognize the value of cross-border collaboration and the global public good. Actions that range from incremental steps to transformational changes are essential in order to reduce risks from climate extremes. Adaptation measures and disaster risk management can enhance social, economic and environmental sustainability. A

¹ *World Youth Report: Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.IV.6).

prerequisite for sustainability in the context of climate change is addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability, including the inequalities that create and sustain poverty and constrain access to resources.

28. Human resources development policies can help to offset the devastating effects of climate change on global economies and human health and reduce the human impact on the global climate. Human resources development policies that create dynamic capabilities and core skills to develop and apply green technologies, accelerate green innovation and shift into the greener industrialization and sustainable development paradigm effectively will help combat the negative effects of climate change. Such policies will also serve to increase skills and provide employment opportunities for citizens in developing countries in particular, many of which will be most adversely affected by climate change.

29. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development recognizes the importance of focusing on priorities such as education, health and food security combined with economic and environmental objectives. The new agenda acknowledges the role of sustainable development and a healthy planet for long-lasting human development.

B. Role of human resources development in addressing global development challenges

Poverty and inequality

30. Growing global interdependence has not only deepened economic relations between countries, but has also led to greater prosperity and economic growth. The benefits, however, have not been distributed equally, as poverty has persisted in many regions and increased globalization and interdependence have been accompanied by persistently high and increasing inequality among and between countries.

31. In 2010, high-income countries received 55 per cent of the world's income, though they accounted for 16 per cent of the global population. At the same time, low-income countries, accounting for 72 per cent of the global population, received just above 1 per cent of global income.²

32. Globalization has also led to rising inequality between households within both developing and industrialized countries. Generally, inequalities in income, wealth, health, education and employment have been pronounced for vulnerable social groups who have less voice and power.

33. The principle behind a human resources development strategy is to ensure that all tiers of society have access to equitable and quality education, health services and employment, which would in turn enable them to improve their lives. Human resources development policies that are directed towards investment in health, education and skills development are key to overcoming poverty and inequality.

Demographic changes

34. Changing population demographics present global policy challenges for the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Human resources

² *Global Governance and Global Rules for Development in the post-2015 Era* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.II.A.1).

development policies that are cognizant of those demographic changes will be essential to successfully reaching the sustainable development goals and targets.

35. In 2015, there were 1.2 billion youths aged 15-24 in the world, a number that is expected to increase to nearly 1.3 billion by 2030.³ One of the biggest challenges faced by developing countries with a growing youth population is the ability to provide them with adequate education and employment opportunities. Youth can be a positive and energetic force for development if they are afforded quality education and opportunities for productive employment. Human resources development policies that aim to invest in youth and provide them with the quality training necessary to enable them to become productive members of the workforce will be required to achieve goals 4 and 8.

36. At the same time, the world is also experiencing a growing ageing population. Globally, the number of people aged 60 years or over is expected to increase from 841 million in 2013 to more than 2 billion in 2050. In 2013, about two thirds of the world's older persons were living in developing countries.⁴ They accounted for over 5 per cent of the population of Africa in 2014, but that proportion is projected to nearly double by 2050, reaching 212 million, and grow to 337 million by 2065 (11 per cent of the total population)⁵ as the present generation of young people become older. With a high potential for improving health and survival into old age, Africa is one of the regions expected to see rapid growth of the older population in the years to come.

37. Forward planning, including human resources development, to cater for the needs of such a large and growing ageing population must take place now. Countries will need to move from health-care systems that focus mainly on curative needs to broad systems that meet the needs of people throughout their lives, responding to preventive, curative and specialized care requirements. In order to do that, health systems and human resources will need strengthening, retooling and training.

38. In countries where the older populations remain employed, human resources development policies that provide relevant work opportunities for that demographic group will be important, especially in areas where those labour earnings are an important source of economic support. In addition, it is evident that there will be a continuation of existing migration patterns from youthful societies to those with ageing populations and employment opportunities. Effective strategies will need to be put in place for their proper integration into the workforce.

Stakeholder participation in human resources development priority setting and policymaking

39. Governments alone cannot achieve the goals of the new agenda. It will require the participation of civil society, the business community and general society as a whole. The need to engage various civil society groups has been recognized since the

³ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Population facts: youth population trends and sustainable development". Available from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2015-1.pdf.

⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Ageing 2013*. Available from <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.pdf>.

⁵ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Population facts: population ageing and sustainable development". Available from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2014-4.pdf.

establishment of the United Nations, as embedded in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, but also by its many bodies, human rights mechanisms and various processes.

40. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 recognized nine sectors of society whose opinions and voices should be heard. Major groups, as established by that Conference, now form a part of any discussions on sustainable development issues and beyond. Similarly, there has been large-scale participation by women's groups, youth, indigenous people and environmental movements in United Nations conferences, and many intergovernmental processes continue to engage large constituencies of civil society groups in almost all fields of work of the United Nations. In recent years, the rights of people with disabilities and migrant groups were enshrined in binding human rights conventions.

41. At the global level, the innovative ideas and norm-setting concepts of civil society provided a creative impetus to the United Nations development agenda. The positive contributions from civil society to sustainable development have been fundamental and have continued to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the sustainable development goals.

42. At the national level, many civil society organizations have been part of a mutual accountability system with governments regarding promises and commitments made. That includes advocacy by civil society groups to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education and health, the rights to participate in cultural life and to share and benefit from scientific advancement and the right to see the application of internationally agreed labour standards.

43. The business sector plays an important role as a provider of employment and training. It also has fulfilled an increasingly important function as a provider of human resources development services through public-private partnerships. In addition, in some countries, institutes of higher learning are privately owned and managed, as are many providers of vocational training.

44. The United Nations Global Compact has engaged business leaders on global labour, human rights and environmental standards since the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. In its 15 years of existence, the Global Compact has become a well-recognized international vehicle for engaging business towards creating a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

45. Altogether, the United Nations has demonstrated a diverse and growing record of civil society participation in its norm-setting work. Organizational principles such as "free prior and informed consent" emanating from indigenous people's rights, as set out in article 10 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and "nothing about us without us" advocated by representatives of people with disabilities in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, have also been recognized in many national and local contexts. Those principles have helped communities to secure their economic and social rights and advance global norms and standards for human resources development. Scaling up those approaches in the post-2015 context will be essential to the successful attainment of the sustainable development goals.

Science, technology and innovation

46. Science, technology and innovation, including environmentally sound technologies, can play a vital role in efforts to address global challenges by facilitating the creation of employment, enhancing the delivery of basic public services, improving access to knowledge and education and empowering marginalized sections of society.

47. The rapid pace of change in information and communications technology (ICT) has brought about the continuous introduction of new services and new opportunities for development applications at an unprecedented and accelerating level. The evolving information society is having a growing, and potentially unknown, impact on social and economic development in the immediate and medium term. The importance of exploiting the potential developmental value of ICT and of considering the development of the inclusive information society in the broader context of the 2030 agenda has often been emphasized. Since then, Member States have enhanced cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation through a new global technology facilitation mechanism, as agreed upon in the 2030 agenda.

48. In spite of recent progress, an important digital divide between countries remains in terms of the availability, connectivity, affordability and use of information and communications technologies and access to broadband. There is a need to close that divide, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all.

49. Science, technology and innovation have the potential to contribute significantly to the advancement of human resources development and to address the multiple dimensions of poverty through a variety of channels. For example, science, technology and innovation could facilitate employment creation, enhance the delivery of public services, improve access to knowledge and education and empower marginalized sections of society. However, there is a need to ensure that such efforts are directed through accessible channels, so that people in need are equipped and empowered in the process.

50. Continued global advancement of sustainable, cleaner and environmentally sound technologies, crucial in the implementation of the new agenda, will also require matching developments in human resources capacity to manage such technologies, particularly in developing countries. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex) called for the continued and focused implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which constitutes an intergovernmentally agreed upon framework to strengthen technology support and capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

51. The creation, development and diffusion of new innovations and technologies and associated know-how were identified in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as powerful drivers for sustainable development. That agenda also establishes a technology facilitation mechanism based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders. It also mandates the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable

development goals (initially composed of members of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; the International Telecommunication Union; the World Intellectual Property Organization; and the World Bank) to promote coordination, coherence and cooperation in that field within the United Nations system, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives.

III. New avenues for advancing human resources development under the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

Human resources development as an integral component of national sustainable development strategies

52. The goal of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development to integrate poverty eradication and sustainable development will require policy integration at all levels, supported by effective mechanisms for that integration. At the national level, a revitalized process of formulating national sustainable development strategies through multi-stakeholder engagement can be expected to play a key role in ensuring such policy integration and coordination.

53. The strategies will need to integrate human resources development in a balanced manner across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. At the same time, human resources development policies will be needed to unlock the human potential, and create the human resources base, for the realization of the 2030 agenda.

54. Many developing countries have significant capacity development requirements, starting with meeting the basic needs of their populations. Supporting and utilizing national expertise for human resources development in national development planning, data collection and analysis, and monitoring and evaluation for evidence-based policymaking, are important for all developing countries, and are particularly critical for the least developed countries. Further development of data, statistics and statistical capacity is also needed for small island developing States and middle-income countries. It will be important to channel support to those ends and towards the strengthening of institutional capacity in those areas.

55. Sustainable development cannot fully succeed without a commitment to equality of opportunity, giving everyone an opportunity to enjoy the fruits of growth. National sustainable development strategies offer new avenues for advancing human resources development and policy integration. Sustainable development strategies and policies can, for example, broadly integrate a people-centred approach that gives attention to disparities.

56. Education, health care, social protection, legal empowerment and social organizations all enable people living in poverty to participate in development. Yet even the provision of those basic services may not empower disenfranchised groups. People living in poverty may be challenged to voice their concerns, and governments may not always evaluate whether services intended to reach everyone actually succeed in doing so. Often, human resources development challenges are exacerbated

by external shocks, yet in many cases policies that integrate local institutional capacity and community involvement are not formulated or implemented.

57. The sustainable development goals will integrate the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development while emphasizing global challenges to a greater extent. The growing interconnection between national, regional and global human resources development challenges will be a key feature in the era of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Human resources development will have an important role to play to support the intrinsic capabilities of countries to address the breadth of issues contained in the sustainable development goals and the broader 2030 agenda, and to integrate the goals and targets into effective national sustainable development strategies and their implementation.

58. Many of the vulnerable people and groups face numerous and overlapping constraints in their ability to cope with setbacks. Those who are living in poverty or are in vulnerable situations may face multiple barriers that could further negatively reinforce each other.

59. Human resources development policies could effectively address vulnerabilities and the ways in which those change by taking an approach based on the life cycle. Recent analysis suggests that children, adolescents and the elderly each face different sets of risks that require targeted responses. Particular periods of life are identified as particularly important: for example, the first thousand days of a child's life, or the transition from school to work or from work to retirement. Setbacks at those points can be especially difficult to overcome and may result in needlessly prolonged negative effects.

60. Strategies that help countries achieve the eradication of poverty and the significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion, and promote sustainable development, require an appreciation of the concepts of vulnerability and resilience. Development will be more equitable and sustainable when vulnerabilities are addressed effectively and all people enjoy the opportunity to share in development progress. Development gains can be sustained through policies that target human resources development in support of sustainable development progress, especially for the most vulnerable people.

Human resources development and partnerships

61. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will play a key role in advancing human resources development and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Facilitating multidisciplinary approaches, in both implementation and review, will need to begin with human resources development. Broad-based partnerships, including for resource mobilization and technology transfer, could be catalytic for unlocking human resources. Those could involve multisector and issue-based partnerships. The configuration and scope of the partnerships could vary considerably depending upon the human resource needs being addressed and the specific country, regional or global contexts.

62. Human resources development approaches can be expected to require greater inclusiveness and increased engagement and participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including from the private sector and civil society. Human resources will need to be developed to pursue such inclusive and participatory approaches to sustainable development.

63. In the past few years, issue-based coalitions of multiple stakeholders in development areas have grown in importance. Those issue-based alliances will need an appropriate mix of financing mechanisms in order to be effective. Human resources development strategies can be expected to build upon a number of financing facilities for issue-based alliances to be established or further strengthened in the era of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

64. Countries use a variety of coordination mechanisms to advance inclusion and to forge and support long-term partnerships, including national interministerial bodies, sector-based bodies bringing together training institutions and providers with the representatives of employers and workers and decentralized local bodies. Those mechanisms involve substantial investments and work effectively when all stakeholders can see their own objectives supported by others. Conditions for support include instances when:

(a) Line ministries, such as those responsible for public infrastructure, research and innovation, environmental protection, international competitiveness and regional integration, rely on a skilled workforce;

(b) The private sector seeks a well-trained workforce capable of further learning so that their enterprises can take advantage of new technologies and adapt to changing market conditions;

(c) Workers and their trade unions are aware that time spent acquiring skills will lead to better employment and standards of living.

65. Establishing bridges between vocational education, training and skills development and the needs of the labour market make it more likely that employees will acquire the skills required by the evolving needs of enterprises and workplaces in different economic sectors and industries.

66. Under the right conditions, regional integration fosters an environment where highly educated and skilled workers are able to take advantage of the regional public goods, such as infrastructure, to bring about innovations in production and services offered. High-end services are critical in facilitating manufacturing activities. Regional integration can allow trade with effective sequencing to drive industrialization, making it possible to upgrade to higher value-added goods and services, which can lead to greater economic growth.

Human resources development and the United Nations system

67. The shift to a sustainable development agenda will require the United Nations development system to identify means of engagement that allow for integrated support to human resources development and the post-2015 agenda. Such integrated support will need to respond to the drivers of change in the era of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which pose a significantly different challenge, including those drivers of change requiring collective action, such as climate change, conflict and systemic risks. Sustaining the human resources development gains that have been made in many developing countries should also be an important objective for the United Nations development system as a whole.

68. Together, those factors will determine the adaptations required to support human resources development. For example, at the global level, the United Nations development system could help ensure the alignment of the full range of global

bodies and initiatives in support of human resources development, and provide the advocacy and convening capacity needed to bring the major global development actors and institutions together in a coordinated approach to human resources development. At the regional level, the United Nations development system needs to provide similar convening and coordination functions, monitor and report on implementation and leverage regional capacities to support national human resources development, including through the exchange of best practices. The nature of human resources development in the era of the 2030 agenda, moreover, will necessitate strengthened and new roles for the United Nations development system at the regional level, beyond coordination and information sharing. For example, there is a need for the United Nations development system to explore options for new and strengthened regional and subregional platforms, data and statistics for the monitoring and review of progress, and for addressing trans-border, intraregional and cross-regional issues related to human resources development.

69. At the national level, the United Nations development system must be able to provide integrated support for human resources development. That will range from, for example, middle-income countries where the focus would be on supporting policy integration and coherence to crisis countries where the United Nations development system needs to strive for the integration of humanitarian relief with long-term development and for breaking the recurrent cycles of conflicts that are devastating to human resources development. In all countries, the United Nations development system can be expected to provide integrated support to national efforts to follow up, review and report on progress in human resources development, as central to the overall agenda, upon request by Member States.

70. Some functions will continue to be important, such as the provision of comprehensive support to least developed and low-income countries and those countries experiencing humanitarian and conflict-affected situations, and the provision of normative and technical assistance to middle-income countries to ensure that no one is left behind. Other functions, such as support to developing countries to address global human resources development challenges, can be expected to require greater attention than in the past.

71. In addition, there are several other areas that have been growing in the work of the United Nations development system in the past decade and which can be expected to become functions in their own right in the new era. They include strengthening integrated policy advocacy for human resources development and fostering strategic innovations and learning in all country contexts.

72. The United Nations development system has a particularly important role to play in strengthening human resources development through policy advice and support to efforts to address inequality. The importance of global human resources development challenges and the accelerating pace of globalization will require further strengthening of the policy advisory function of the Organization in all developing countries. The adoption of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development is a window of opportunity to advance human resources development in an integrated manner, using arrangements at the country level to help ensure greater coherence.

73. The United Nations development system also needs a workforce that has the necessary capacities and flexibility to transcend specific functional areas for integrated support to human resources development. Human resource development requires capacity in the United Nations development system for upstream and

integrated policy support, drawing upon the specialized expertise of different entities. An integrated approach will also be particularly important in order to draw upon the national capacities, systems and institutions at the country level. Capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system, and the use of national capacities, systems and institutions should be central to the provision of support at the country level. The importance of human resources development for the achievement of the 2030 agenda will make it important to ensure that the interlinkages are coherent and mutually supportive.

74. The need for the enhanced integration of inputs from United Nations entities can be expected to require stronger coordination capability to leverage knowledge, expertise and resources. The need to engage in strategic partnerships for human resources development with civil society and private sector organizations will require enhanced capacity for planning, coordination and the leveraging of expertise and resources. Therefore, it is particularly important, upon the adoption of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, that Member States and the United Nations development system define carefully the policy integration, planning and coordination requirements for a holistic United Nations response.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

Pursuing human resources development in support of a unified development agenda

75. There is a need to develop the human resources capable of meeting policy integration and cooperation requirements at all levels. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development demands integrated policy responses to complex development challenges at the national, regional and global levels and to the growing systemic risks associated with accelerating globalization and the increased interconnectedness of countries.

76. Supportive institutions at all levels are needed to enable diverse actors to effectively align their efforts with the objectives of human resources development to help countries achieve the 2030 agenda.

77. A skilled, educated, healthy, capable, productive and flexible workforce, equipped with knowledge of sustainable development, is the foundation for countries to achieve the 2030 agenda. As such, countries may wish to align human resources development with national sustainable development strategies.

National level

78. Countries may wish to further align education and training systems with labour market needs. School curricula and skills training programmes may need to be refined regularly to meet the requirements of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

79. Strategies to strengthen human resources development may be further integrated into emerging sectors, particularly ICT for development.

80. Countries should strengthen institutions and regulations so that they are able to respond in a timely manner to economic downturns in order to preserve employment and protect workers in vulnerable employment.

81. Measures could be devised to reduce unemployment and underemployment among young men and women, including by providing incentives for recruiting, retaining and retooling; assistance in searching for employment and matching employment to skills; technical and vocational training; and by promoting youth entrepreneurship.

82. Innovative measures could be further explored to harness the benefits of migration. Integrated policy analysis could be pursued on migration patterns and the economic and labour market effects of internal and external migration, with a view to advancing human resources development objectives.

International level

83. The United Nations development system needs to support the efforts of countries to formulate and implement integrated policies through a broad range of collaboration, with a strong focus on human resources development.

84. The United Nations development system should assist, at the request of Member States, in the assessment of existing planning and review mechanisms at the national level. That would include evaluating national plans and reports and their alignment with national human resources development strategies and suitability for measuring progress in the sustainable development goals. It would also include recommending principles and elements for tailoring the global agenda to national circumstances and implementing effective national human resources development strategies.

85. The policy integration requirements of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development call for working methods at the national, regional and global levels that enable the United Nations development system to collaborate and share the knowledge of entities in an efficient manner.

86. Development cooperation should contribute to human resources development that is aligned with national sustainable development strategies. Donors may consider dedicating official development assistance to human resources development and should examine the ways in which sectoral aid could better support human resources development requirements.

87. The expansion of public-private partnerships for human resources development could be considered further, particularly for employment creation for youth and women.

88. As part of a comprehensive and integrated human resources development policy, efforts should be undertaken to better integrate migrant labour. Remittance costs should be lowered to maximize the overall benefits of migration.

89. The diversity of human resources development requirements and the implication of universality require broad engagement by the United Nations development system in response to specific national contexts.

90. As Member States are putting in place a follow-up and review framework for the 2030 agenda, the United Nations development system needs to ensure that it fully supports human resources development at the national level and provides the data, information and analysis necessary to enable Member States to meet the integration requirements of the agenda.